

HERSETH SANDLIN CONTINUES OUTREACH TO ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS ON SOUTH DAKOTA FLOODING

Washington, DC-(June 30, 2010)- This week, U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin met with Federal Highway Administration Administrator Victor Mendez to discuss ways the Department of Transportation can help communities in South Dakota deal with short-term and long-term damage to roads and highways due to flooding.

This meeting follows one late last week when Rep. Herseth Sandlin met with Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate. Rep. Herseth Sandlin is hosting these meetings with officials in relevant agencies to discuss the concerns of South Dakotans regarding flooding.

“I specifically requested these meetings so that I could personally deliver input from South Dakotans directly to the heads of key federal agencies,” Rep. Herseth Sandlin said. “I held public meetings in eight South Dakota communities this spring, and heard from a range of local officials, farmers, homeowners and others regarding the challenges presented by flooding. They shared with me important input, which I shared with Administrators Fugate and Mendez, about the impact of the damage on transportation, infrastructure and agriculture, and the need to enhance long-term flood management capabilities.”

Rep. Herseth Sandlin and Administrator Mendez discussed ways that the Emergency Relief (ER) Program can help provide funds to repair eligible roads. The ER program can help counties obtain funds to not just repair roads, but improve them so that they can better withstand future flooding. Herseth Sandlin and Administrator Mendez also discussed possible ways this program can be more helpful to rural communities and countries, and where local governments can obtain technical assistance to develop plans for improving their road network.

“Local economies, infrastructure and community life are continually put to the test with these floods and federal resources can provide important assistance to get communities back on their

feet,” Rep. Herseth Sandlin said. “I look forward to working with FEMA and FHA on the development of long-term flood mitigation plans.”

On June 23, Rep Herseth Sandlin met with FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate to discuss the ongoing flooding South Dakota has been experiencing. Administrator Fugate traveled to South Dakota in March to review the flooding personally. Herseth Sandlin and Administrator Fugate discussed the need to find a way to improve structures for the long-term rather than relying on responsive, band-aid approaches – such as repairing roadways so they are able withstand flood damage over time, rather than just patching up the same road year after year.

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